

Job description

Category Specialist

- Grade: PO2
- Reports to: Lead within Procurement and strategic Category Management
- Direct reports: None
- Your team: Procurement and Strategic Category Management
- Service area: Progressive Procurement
- Directorate: Community Wealth Building

Special requirements of the post

Workstyle: Front facing (High presence, three to four days a week)

- Colleagues with regular physical contact with residents and businesses in the borough and on-site, but some activities could be done remotely (such as paperwork)
 - This role is primarily desk-based but requires regular on-site engagement for activities best delivered face to face, such as collaboration, meetings, and team events. More frequent attendance may be required depending on business needs, including providing office cover for colleagues.
 - The postholder may be required to work from a range of Council, partner, supplier or other facilities, both in and out of borough, as well as from home. Occasional site visits may be required.
 - Safely transport equipment and materials as required
 - Undertake extended periods of reading, screen use and computer-based work
 - Attend meetings, conference calls and video calls on or off site as required
 - Use prescribed technology and collaborate to provide cover for peers
 - Maintain systems, records and files in line with national, local, professional and legislative standards
 - Flexible working and reasonable adjustments may apply, subject to business needs and management agreement.
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Special requirements of the post

- This post requires a DBS check (Basic level)
- Subject to the Council's declaration of interest procedure
- Designated as a politically restricted post

Our mission

Islington is a place rich with diversity and culture. As a council our sense of purpose couldn't be clearer: we serve. It's in the logo. We are committed to challenging inequality in the borough and as one of the largest employers we know that to look after the place and the planet, we have to look after our people. **Together we can change the future.**

To do this, everyone who works at Islington Council lives by a set of values which guide us in everything that we do: collaborative, ambitious, resourceful, and empowering. They spell out 'CARE', which is what we think public service is all about.

Key responsibilities

1. Develop, progress and manage strategic Category Management, Commercial & Assurance, Change and Social Value programmes and projects, working cross-departmentally. This includes developing strategies, action plans and procurement forward plans, exploring innovative and non-routine approaches.
2. Provide high-quality technical, strategic and professional procurement advice to Directors, senior managers, services, cross-organisational boards and key partners, including Anchor Institutions, with visible confidence, credibility and impact.
3. Act as a subject-matter expert and "critical friend" on procurement legislation, governance and policy, including the National Procurement Policy Statement and associated Procurement Policy Notes.
4. Resolve complex cross-service commercial, assurance, change and social value issues, understanding and clearly reporting on the financial, resource, risk and opportunity impacts for the Council.
5. Work as part of a skilled, cross-organisational professional team, supporting the relevant Heads of Service, adopting a business-partner approach and leading on designated projects and programmes. Cover for peers when required and contribute to collective delivery.

6. Drive delivery against personal and organisational objectives, maintaining high standards of performance, professionalism and accountability.
7. Manage challenging and occasionally hostile situations confidently and independently, negotiating, implementing or withdrawing aspects of procurement, category, commercial, change or social value activity in a transparent, proportionate and legally compliant manner.
8. Lead and contribute to cross-cutting commercial and assurance workstreams, including:
 - Fraud, bribery and corruption prevention
 - Supplier and financial due diligence
 - Debarment monitoring and statutory checks
 - Transparency reporting and statutory notices
 - Freedom of Information support
 - Contracts registry maintenance
 - Spend analytics, reporting, dashboards and Board/Committee reporting
9. Act as a responsible officer for relevant systems, ensuring effective data capture, integrity, legislative compliance and risk mitigation across the supply chain.
10. Lead on embedding social value, community wealth building and inclusive economic outcomes through category and procurement strategies, including:
 - Leveraging supplier innovation and collaboration
 - Measuring, monitoring and enforcing social value commitments
 - Supporting Section 106 negotiations and delivery
 - Driving delivery of National Procurement Policy Statement programmes across the organisation
11. Actively contribute to reducing economic inequality, supporting sustainability, inclusivity and fairness, and advancing the Council's climate, equalities and community priorities.
12. Horizon-scan developments in procurement, commercial, social value and assurance practice; contribute to the development and improvement of policies, systems, guidance and ways of working.
13. Recognise when recommendations require wider organisational approval and take responsibility for implementing agreed changes and managing their impacts.
14. Support complex bids, business cases, grant applications, insourcing assessments, specifications and strategies, including where the Council acts as a supplier.
15. Provide training, guidance and knowledge-sharing to colleagues as required.

16. Undertake any other duties consistent with the grade and level of responsibility of the role.

Budget and Resource Responsibilities

- Influence significant spend through category management, procurement strategies, business cases and contract awards
- Access to a range of financial systems (e-tendering, invoicing, purchasing, reporting), with limited or no delegated approval authority
- Management of personal resources and access to purchase card information and relevant systems in line with governance requirements

Compliance

Ensure adherence to legal, regulatory, and policy requirements under GDPR, Health and Safety, Employee Code of Conduct and in your area of expertise by identifying opportunities and risks, and escalating issues as necessary.

Person specification

Your application form needs to demonstrate how you fulfil the role's requirements. It is essential to address the criteria, as this will be used to evaluate your suitability for the position.

Essential and desirable criteria

Essential: the basic requirements that must be met for someone to be considered for a particular job. These criteria are mandatory and cannot be negotiated. Essential criteria directly impact the core qualifications or skills necessary to perform the job effectively.

Desirable: the additional qualities, skills, or qualifications that would be advantageous for a candidate to possess but are not mandatory. Not meeting them does not automatically disqualify someone from consideration for the job. This also allows candidates who do not possess certain desirable criteria the opportunity to explain how their other knowledge, experience and skills relate to these and what they may be in the process of doing or willing to do to achieve these.

Knowledge & Qualifications

Point	Criteria description	Essential
1	Relevant qualification at Ofqual Level 4 (HNC) or higher, and/or equivalent professional, vocational, or technical qualification, and/or equivalent assessed professional accreditation. <i>Relevant subjects may include: public administration; management or policy; law, legislation or legal theory; procurement and supply, including equivalent accreditation such as CIPS Diploma Member.</i>	E1
2	Active on the CIPS Professional Register, with a maintained, annually assessed supply chain ethical certification (e.g. CIPS Ethical Procurement and Supply), or demonstrable non-CIPS equivalent reassessed at least annually.	E2
3	Transforming Public Procurement certification from the Government Commercial College.	E3
4	Relevant personnel management or project management qualification from an accredited institution at Ofqual RQF Level 4 (HNC) or higher; or commitment to an agreed Level 4 upskilling programme, subject to performance management and probation, to be achieved within 24 months.	E4
5	Evidence of continuous recognised Professional Development (CPD).	E5

Experience

Point	Criteria description	Essential
6	Solid experience working within a large organisation, including a professional procurement and/or supply environment.	E6
7	Experience of finding and reviewing guidance and providing advice to remove barriers to participation.	E7
8	Experience using practical, theoretical, and technical advanced knowledge to resolve queries or issues across a range of subject matters.	E8
9	Experience using analysis, interpretation, and evaluation to produce solutions supporting corporate objectives, efficiencies, or savings.	E9
10	Experience delivering or supervising work across one or more of the following areas: • Procurement and supply • Commercial and assurance activity • Change, transformation, and/or social value initiatives • Project-related work	E10

Skills

Point	Criteria description	Essential
11	Demonstrated ability to ensure the quality and accuracy of data entered into systems and to provide reliable information to management.	E11
12	Ability to manage high volumes of requests to required standards and deadlines, while handling frequent challenges, conflicting priorities, and changing demands.	E12
13	Demonstrated ability to appropriately challenge requests that impact others and to deal calmly and professionally with contentious or confrontational situations, using tact, persuasion, and sensitivity.	E13
14	Ability to support the creation, monitoring, and implementation of policy and practice, both new and existing.	E14

15	Demonstrated ability to use resources effectively, make well-reasoned recommendations, and understand broader implications.	E15
16	Demonstrated ability to work with minimal supervision, applying advanced knowledge, skills, or aptitude across a range of specialist matters relevant to the role.	E16

Our accreditations



Our accreditations include Disability Confident Leader, The Mayor's Good Work Standard, London Living Wage Employer, Stonewall Diversity Champion, and Employer with Heart.